

History: Not Just Facts

Interpreting Evidence to Write History

After the activity, students will be able to:

- ❖ Define the term history.
- ❖ Analyze historical evidence for patterns and relationships.
- ❖ Write an historical account from evidence.
- ❖ Recognize that history includes subjective interpretation of facts.

Activity:

1. Write in your notes your definition of history. Give consideration to this task before responding so as not to be overly simplistic.

Consider the following statements:

- History is a record or account, usually written and in chronological

order, of past events. (Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary)

- History extends and elaborates memory by interpreting relics and synthesizing reports from past eyewitnesses; historians study the past by scrutinizing accounts of what has happened in the real world.
(Historian David Lowenthal)

Continued Questions:

1. What is meant by historical evidence?
Does evidence consist only of facts?
What is the difference between facts and opinions? What roles do facts and opinions play in history?
2. Can the work of historians ever be objective? (ask students to write personal and historical examples in which a person's values might affect his or her account of an event. Ex. Difference between parent and teen on

curfew violations; Difference in British and American historians' interpretations of Revolutionary War causes.

What I hope you have concluded is that historians most likely agree on the details of history but may dispute over how to interpret historical evidence in order to determine the causes, effects, and significance of events.

Activity:

1. Review sheet 1a and 1b. These are the evidence to be used in our activity. They are a series of checks written between 1903 & 1931.
2. In groups of three or four students, construct the historical circumstances in which the checks were written. Look for patterns and relationships in the information.

